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ABSTRACT

Talents Unlimited is an approach to instruction that nurtures the development of talents in areas other than the traditional academic subjects. To help children learn basics, the approach makes use of thinking, communication, decision-making, planning, and forecasting skills in teaching academic subjects. Twenty second grade students participating in the program experienced at least two activities per week. The control group consisted of 115 similarly typed students. Both groups were from a small town/rural area in Michigan. Comparisions were made of (1) participants' scores on a teacher-made pretest and posttest of self-concept and scores of 115 comparable control students, and (2) the self-concepts of low versus high academic achievers. Results indicated that the treatment group had greater academic self-concept gains than did the control group and less of a deficit than the control group in social self-concept. The program thus was found to be more effective for low academic achievers than for high academic achievers. (Appendices provide 42 lesson plans and instruments used in the study, self assessment surveys for students, and questionnaires for teachers.) (Author/RH)

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THE EFFECTS OF TALENTS UNLIMITED ON ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SELF-CONCEPT

by

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Educational Research Project Required in
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Abstract

The purpose for this program evaluation study was to determine if the use of Talents Unlimited had any effect on student self-concept, and if the effect was any greater on low compared to high academic achievers. Twenty second graders were involved in the Talents Unlimited program. Their self-concept level was compared to 115 comparable second graders through a pre and post teacher made self-concept assessment instrument. Improvement rates were then compared. The experimental group was also placed in rank academic achievement order through the results of the Stanford math and reading assessment. Another comparison was made as to how the program affected the self-concept of low verses high academic achievers.

The results showed that the experimental group had greater academic self-concept gains than the control group and less of a deficit than the control group in social self-concept. The program was more effective for low academic achievers than high academic achievers.

Therefore, this study showed that the use of Talents Unlimited is an effective tool for promoting positive self-concepts.

The Effects of Talents Unlimited on
Academic and Social Self-Concept

Introduction

Problem: Increasing studies have been and are still being done on the relationship of academic achievement to self-concept. The same results keep coming to light. They show that there is a relationship that is both positive and reciprocal.

We can make two assumptions from such evidence. They are: 1. The greater the academic achievement of a student, the better his self-concept will be; and 2. The more positive a student's self-concept, the higher he will achieve academically.

Even though the studies agree that a correlation exists, the more detailed studies define the effects to a finer degree. They point out that many sub-sets of self-concept fit together to form the general self-concept. In reviewing self-concept, they note that the correlation between it and academic achievement, although it exists, is relatively small. But when you look at the pieces of self-concept contributed to in the school setting, i.e. academic and social, the

correlation is much stronger.

Since this correlation exists, an increase in positive self-concept is a worthwhile goal for educators. What could be a more worthy goal for the schools than to give students the self-confidence they need for life and at the same time improve academic achievement?

A number of different ways have been suggested for teachers to help improve their students' self concepts. These go all the way from units dealing solely with self-concept to activities within the academic realm to just a changed teacher attitude. No matter which approach is used, the experts agree on two attributes any self-concept program must have. First, each student must have a chance to feel successful in the academic and social realm. There must also be a no-risk, free-from-fear-of-ridicule atmosphere in the classroom. Every student must know that he has a value in the school setting.

As an educator in today's system, I feel slight panic when I read studies like these because I don't feel I can add another thing to an already overloaded program. I then look at what I am already doing to see if I might already be enhancing self-concept in my existing program.

Looking at the two attributes listed earlier, I am reminded of Talents Unlimited, a teaching-learning strategy I use in my classroom. Its very goal is that by using it, at least 90% of the students will achieve above average at

some time throughout the year (Taylor, 1968). This fits right in with Beane's (1982) cry that we must allow all of our students to feel success. He says, "If we want learners to feel they can succeed, we must help them to actually experience success"(p. 504).

Also built into this strategy is the philosophy that all reasonable answers to divergent type questions are acceptable because we want to encourage creative thinking. By using this program, the teacher promotes a lot of positive student interaction. What makes the program even more attractive is that it does all of this without taking time away from the academics. It is, rather, a strategy for teaching children academics and how to think.

Documented evidence already shows Talents Unlimited as a worthy academic teaching tool (Bobowski, 1978). If it also increases self-concept, it furthers its worthiness, and I don't have to add anything new to my teaching curriculum.

Definitions: In Hansford and Hattie's (1982) self-esteem study, they describe self-concept as, "the person's perception of him or herself" (p.123). This is the definition I will use throughout my study.

Social self-concept is a person's perception of himself in a social setting.

Academic self-concept is a person's perception of himself and his ability for successfully handling academic skills in an academic setting.

Talents Unlimited is, "an instructional approach that nurtures the development of talents in areas other than the traditional academic" (Bobowski, 1978, p.44). It is a program that uses productive thinking, communication, decision making, planning, and forecasting skills along with the academics in teaching children the basics. Using the five additional talent areas helps promote original and divergent thinking and thus creates a high level of acceptance via positive reinforcement.

Hypothesis: As a result of the no-risk, high level of success and the high level of student interaction atmosphere in the Talents Unlimited classroom, the use of the Talents Unlimited program will have a positive effect on the academic and social self-concept of second grade students.

Due to assumption number one stated on page one of this report, the effect will be greater for low academic achievers than for high academic achievers. The high academic achievers already have a positive academic self-concept due to their previous school successes.

Limitations of the Study: Since my class is the first opportunity in our school for students to experience Talents Unlimited, I move very slowly. I want to make sure that all my students are very comfortable in each talent area before I introduce a new talent. As a result, I usually only get to four of the five talent areas in second grade. Decision making is often left out because of the time element and the

higher order of thinking skills required of the students. Forecasting is also used minimally first semester. Because of this, I won't be giving my students the complete Talents Unlimited program.

Time also enters in as a factor when you look at the study as a whole. Will five months of this program be enough to really have a significant effect on student self-concept? I tnink the ideal check would be on students who have been involved with Talents Unlimited over several years as compared to those who have been in a regular classroom setting.

Since second grade is a review year, a year for students to really gain confidence in the basic skills, I feel a gain in self-concept is a natural result. Hopefully the use of a control group will control for the student self-concept gains that are solely a result of the gains in confidence and the passage of time.

Other factors enter in also. When studying such a subjective area, we must also take into account teacher-pupil relationships that might be involved. A new teacher-pupil relationship in the second grade can really have an effect, either positive or negative, on each student. Also, with the thrust on the self-concept issue in education today, we can count on teachers of the control group using some strategies to enhance self-concept in their classrooms. These strategies will have an effect on the self-concept assessments of the control group students. Hopefully the effect of these

strategies will be somewhat neutralized by the self-concept strategies I use outside of the realm of the Talents Unlimited program.

Literature Review

Self-Concept: As I previously stated, there is a lot of material on self-concept and what type of program characteristics are associated with an increase in positive self-concept. However, I have not found any that statistically prove the causation between the use of the Talents Unlimited program and an increase in student self-concept.

In the book, Diagnosing Classroom Learning Environment (Fox, Luszki, and Schmuck, 1966), it is noted that children come to school with an already formed self-concept, but one that is easily changed in the school setting. The problem the authors see is that it's so often changed for the worse. They say, "It is of utmost importance for the teacher to create a climate favorable to the development of a healthy concept of the self" (p.101). They do not identify strategies with which to do this. They also say that students who feel liked by others will like themselves better.

Canfield and Wells (1976) agree with the above study as they point out that self-concept is learned. Since it is learned, teachers should do things that will promote the learning of a positive rather than a negative self-concept. Some of the strategies that they suggest are that we allow

students to experience success and then strengthen the experiences by providing positive reinforcement in regard to those successes. They list the "most important is creating an environment of mutual support and caring" (p.5). In reviewing data relating self-concept to learning, they feel the evidence is conclusive that there is a positive relationship.

With her years of experience in the education field, Opal B. Melvin (1983) agrees fully with the previous studies. Looking at Carl Roger's studies and her own experience, she takes it one step farther. She puts forth the development of a positive self-concept as the primary job for teachers. There are nineteen steps that she lists for teachers to take in pursuit of this goal. In addition to Canfield and Well's ideas of promoting success and good feelings, she emphasizes developing personal, caring relationships with students and making learning a meaningful venture.

An existential approach to learning is the way to promote a positive self-concept according to Reck (1982). By allowing the students freedom to become involved in the learning process, they will see that they have control of their own lives and having this control, they can feel good about themselves.

Distinguished Professor Arthur W. Combs (1982) disagrees with the way everyone points their finger at education today and says it's not doing its job. He feels we need to teach more content, and we need more of an affective side

added to education. In order for the facts to become used and understood, they first must become meaningful. This is only possible through affective education. Combs lists self-concept as an important part of this, and he notes the reciprocal effect of a positive self-concept and academic achievement. He explains, "In the classrooms, self-concepts determine the quality of the students' learning. The reverse is also true. Student experience in the classroom vitally affects the self-concept formed about abilities to learn" (p.496).

A study of ninety-six fourth and fifth graders was the basis of "The Relationship Between Children's Self-Concepts, Perception of School, and Life Change" (Dobson, Campbell, and Dobson, 1982). They used various assessment instruments to find out how the students felt about themselves, and how this compared with various life events and attitudes toward school. Their results agree with and further define the correlation between self-concept and academic achievement. When looking at general self-concept, they point out that the correlation, although positive, is rather small. But when we look at the comparison to the students' academic and social self-concepts, it jumps greatly. The correlation is enough evidence to make the promotion of a positive self-concept a worthy goal for schools. To accomplish this goal, Dobson, Campbell, and Dobson feel we must make "attempts to personalize the schooling experiences" by "teaching the whole

child and acknowledging individual differences" (p.105).

Evidence found by Dennis A. Revicki (1982) supports that found in Dobson, Campbell, and Dobson's study at a different level. Revicki gave one hundred fourty-seven second graders a self-report questionnaire and the Stanford Achievement Test. He compared those results to home and SES measurements. This review also showed a higher correlation between achievement and academic and social self-concept than general self-concept.

Hansford and Hattie (1982) did an extensive study examining one hundred twenty-eight self-concept studies. Their results also established that different facets of self-concept produced a higher correlation with achievement than others. They particularly noted that academic self-concept was one of these.

In reviewing studies that look at self-concept and achievement, West, Fish and Stevens (ND) agree that the correlation between self-concept and achievement is significant, but they disagree with Fox, Luszki, Schmuck and others in saying that it is a primary determinant in education, and therefore should be an utmost priority. They see self-concept as only one of many contributing factors. They cannot justify school programs based solely on the enhancement of self-concept. They see the use of the reciprocal effect as a better way. Work on things that will improve academic ability, they say. By doing this the students will feel successful, and their self-concept will in turn have

its positive effect on academic achievement.

Beane (1982), recognizing the positive correlation between academic achievement and the self-concept that has to do with school and academic related things, also goes against "separate artificial" self-concept activities. Beane feels that curriculum should be such that it covers the self-concept development need. It should promote diverse and individual thinking, permeate the whole curriculum, and be numerous. By adding this facet, he thinks we would also be adding to learning.

Dr. Lewis Bossing (ND) did a study based solely on his own observations. This author wanted to see, in action, how the enhancement of self-concept was related to achievement in mathematics. He studied sixteen low math students. After a peroid of regular math teaching, he gave these students a self-enhancing activity along with their daily lessons. He found, "as a result of the classroom intervention, the attitude of the students seemed to improve in the areas of teacher-student relationships and academic ability" (p.6).

Personal Comment: Looking at all the evidence, I don't think we can deny the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. Since as educators we strive for academic achievement and to produce self-confident students, I feel working toward producing positive self-concepts is a worthy goal. Although worthy, I don't see it as the primary goal

of teachers, however. Our primary goal must still be to educate students.

I must agree with West, Fish, Stevens, and Beane in that self-concept exercises should be a part of curriculum. I'm sure that separate self-concept practices are successful, but only to the end of enhancing self-concept. Why use this valuable time when the same goals can be achieved while presenting the academics? Why not "kill two birds with one stone"? I hear the constant cry from educators that there is no time to add new programs. The solution is to fit self-concept improvement exercises in with what we're already doing, that is, to make it a part of existing curriculum.

Talents Unlimited: A strategy I use in the pursuit of academic achievement is Talents Unlimited. More and more educators are recognizing this strategy as a valuable teaching tool. Through an examination of some of this program's philosophies, I see a parallel with the methods called for by experts that can be used to enhance students' self-concepts.

Carol Schlichter (1983), one of the originators of Talents Unlimited, sees the use of productive thinking as necessary when teaching science. She reasons that since science is teaching the unknown and unexpected, it is wrong to have students looking for just the one correct answer. In teaching science, students should be allowed to explore

in getting to the right answer. Schlichter calls for giving as many students success as often as possible when she says, "Further, convergent questions sacrifice the potential for many students to be rewarded for good answers, since their focus is a search for one right or best answer" (p.10).

In his initial speculation about a program such as Talents Unlimited, founder Dr. Calvin Taylor (1968) notes the additional chance of success as one of the side benefits to a program that cultivates the whole person. He explains, "Moreover, nearly all students will have the rewarding experience of being above average in one or another talent area if we cultivate enough different talents in the classroom" (p.86). It was interesting to note that in his bibliography for this paper, Taylor included many self-concept studies.

In another of Taylor's articles (1963), he reviews the same points stated above and then goes into even greater depth. He shows that besides putting every student in a position of success because of his above average ability in at least one of the talent areas, we also make him feel successful by accepting his attempts at divergent thinking. Each reasonable answer is acceptable, thus making the student who thought up that answer feel more acceptable also.

"The Care and Feeding of Talent", by Rita Cipalla Bobowski (1978), examines the Talents Unlimited program as it was put into practice in Mobile, Alabama, the pilot location. She quotes teacher Rosetta Mims in explaining the

the effect a chance of success has on students, "When the kids discover what their talent is, they just glow in knowing that they have some worth, that their ideas are important" (p. 44). Coordinator of staff development, Otis Brunson, reemphasizes this point saying, "Talents Unlimited will not let a child fail in the classroom" (p.44). This article also points out that discussion and interaction are important parts of this program, and the students, as well as the teachers, must be accepting of others' ideas. All these aspects attach an air of excitement to learning with Talents Unlimited. Bobowski sums it up by saying, "Operating in such a spirited environment, it's not hard to see why Talents Unlimited has been so successful in motivating children, improving their self-images, and preparing them to enter the world of adults" (p. 48).

Personal Comment: As I noted in looking at the literature on self-concept, the authors point out the same or very similar attributes that all school self-concept programs should include. I have summed these up. They should: (1) Allow all students a chance at success; (2) Promote an environment of support of teacher and students; (3) Make learning meaningful; and (4) Allow for and encourage individual differences. Comparing these to what I've read about and experienced in working with Talents Unlimited, I see a very strong parallel. They both are after the same goals.

The research evidence also proves that the Talents Unlimited program follows my other criterion, that is, this program promotes academic achievement (Bobowski, 1978).

The proven academic gains and excitement toward learning associated with Talents Unlimited has already made it a useful teaching strategy in my opinion. If it does in fact also promote positive self-concepts, it is all the more worthy. As an educator, I strive to see all of my students "glow" with the knowledge that they have succeeded.

Description of Procedures

Subjects: My experimental group consisted of twenty second graders. There were eleven girls and nine boys. They were predominantly white from middle-class homes. They had an average range of abilities, none being mainstreamed. The control group consisted of one hundred fifteen similarly typed students. Both groups of students came from a basically small town/rural school district in south western Michigan.

Materials: Most of my Talents Unlimited lesson plans were teacher-made so that they fit into my second grade curriculum. Some of the ideas were adapted from the TAPs (1978), Talent Activity Packets, designed by the Division of Staff Development in the Mobile County Schools. I also used ideas from area Talents Unlimited teachers.

Treatment: I planned a minimum of two Talents Unlimited activities per week per child. These were whole class or small group activities. The students' responses took on a variety of modes. They included individual and group written, individual and group pictures, and oral brainstorming. Besides the planned Talents Unlimited activities, at least one unplanned activity per week came up also. For reasons stated earlier, I omitted the decision making talent from this study. A brief summary of the planned Talents Unlimited activities I used is included in Appendix A.

Instruments and Procedures: To check the self-concept of my control group, I developed my own assessment (Appendix B-1). I didn't find a measurement tool that was as simple as I felt necessary for that grade level and also broken apart into different self-concept catagories. In developing my own tests, I did refer to suggestions and tests cited by Fox, Luszki, and Schmuck (1966). I administered this assessment at the beginning of the year and at the end of the first semester.

To the teachers of the control group, I gave a questionaire regarding the emphasis they place on enhancing self-concept in their classrooms, the types of activities they use in pursuit of this goal, and the amount of class time these activities take.

A questionaire regarding the effect of Talents Unlim-

ited on students was given to all teachers in Ottawa County familiar with Talents Unlimited. There were eighty-six teachers in this group. The feedback from these, plus interviews with two avid Talents Unlimited users and two Talents Unlimited trainers (Appendix B-4 and 5) provided me with additional information on the experiential Talents Unlimited program. Also helpful here were my own reflections on my Talents Unlimited lesson plans.

To check the difference in self-concept gains between high and low academic achievers, I split the experimental group in half according to the results of the Stanford Achievement Test administered in early September.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Talent Teacher Questionaire: Forty-seven percent of the teacher questionaires were returned. Of these, sixty-five percent of the teachers had fully implemented the program in their classrooms. These are the surveys I used for my study.

The Talents Unlimited teachers listed many good reasons why they feel Talents Unlimited is a worthy teaching tool. Nineteen percent of the teachers included the promotion of positive self-concepts as an initial reason.

When asked if Talents Unlimited has any effect on student self-concept, eighty-one percent of the teachers felt it did, and the effect was a positive one. Twelve percent had

no comment on this, and eight percent were not really sure. None of the teacher questioned felt there was a negative effect or no effect at all.

The teachers who feel Talents Unlimited has a positive effect on students, feel this is true because of some of the basic philosophies of the program. These are much the same as I listed in my earlier discussion. The reason stated most often is the program's emphasis on all students having good ideas. Right behind this, going hand in hand with it, is that through the promotion of divergent thinking, students and teachers are more accepting of others. Other reasons mentioned were, students are able to see self growth and where their talents lie, the large amount of positive reinforcement inherent in the program, the cooperation promoted through the activities, and for the non-academic students, a chance to be able to participate at an equal level.

In summary, most of the teachers using Talents Unlimited see that the program does affect student self-concept, and this effect is positive.

Talent Teacher Interviews: The two interviews with Talent teachers supported and expanded what the other teachers wrote in the questionaire.

In talking about why he uses Talents Unlimited in the classroom, Meyers listed the enhancement of self-concept. In developing divergent thinking skills, he sees the program also going in another direction. The divergent answers

allow for, even promote positive peer reactions to each other. He quotes something he often hears from students involved in Talents Unlimited activities as being, "Hey, that's a neat idea!" Through this, students see they're worth something, and they're often surprised at their own ability.

Even though Cronk didn't list the promotion of a positive self-concept as a reason he uses the program, when asked if it does have an effect, he indicated that there definitely was a positive one. This is so because in using the diverse talents, students start recognizing their strengths, and peers recognize each other's strengths. One student especially comes to his mind. Although not real strong academically, he was a terrific forecaster. This student could hardly wait for a forecasting activity, and when it came, he bubbled over with excitement. This isn't only true of just one student, as Cronk explains that when he does a talent activity, he can, "see more sparkles in the eyes of all the kids". One of the bonus effects he sees this program having on his students is the development and nurturing of empathy.

In looking at the effects of the program on low and high academic students, both teachers have had similar experiences. For the low academic students, the effect is immediate and positive, as these students flourish more quickly in the open-ended type activity. Meyers attributes this to the fact that for once some of their answers are

worth while.

They also both note the difficulty for many of the higher academic students to get used to the idea that there is more than one right answer. Cronk notes their cautiousness to risk at first, but as they get into the program, they become as involved as the lower academic students. When they reach this point, Meyers notes that assimilating the talents to other areas comes more easily to these students.

Talent Trainers Interview: The two trainers I spoke with, Alan Ten Eyck and Judy Harpold, are in a unique situation as far as the Talents Unlimited program goes. They train their student teachers to use the program both for themselves in completing their course requirements and for the students to whom they are doing their student teaching. Even though it is presented as an optional strategy, Harpold notes that most of her students love it. They show this by enrolling later in a three week graduate seminar. Ten Eyck feels this positive feeling is a result of the students appreciating the practicalness of this tool. They seem to feel "comfortable and safe" using it.

As far as improving the self-concept of her student teachers, Harpold feels Talents Unlimited has a positive effect. She sees it as giving them confidence because they have a tool with which they can walk into the classroom and be assured that their planned activity is something that the kids can relate to.

When Harpold and Ten Eyck have used the program with

children, they note the same effects as Cronk and Meyers on low and high academic achievers. Al pointed out how it gave the low a chance at success. In the high, they often saw some frustration.

Personal Journal Reactions: Looking at my reactions to my Talents Unlimited lessons, I see a lot of reinforcement for what the other educators noted.

My students really enjoyed the lessons in which I used Talents Unlimited. They enjoyed the change of pace this alternate learning strategy had to offer.

I really appreciate the active involvement by all members of my class during Talent activities. I noted in one of my earlier oral brainstorming activities that each of my students made at least two contributions. This in itself is exciting to me, as one hundred percent involvement doesn't happen all that often. What even made it more exciting was that it was the very first time that one of my little girls volunteered to participate. It also felt good being able to give her positive reinforcement for her answers, and then to watch her smile with the knowledge that she made a worthwhile contribution.

Daily reading groups can get to be a little too routine after a while. This didn't seem to happen as quickly as the Talent activities kept the spark lit. The students liked the chances to let their creativity shine.

The student interaction during our Talent lessons

was very positive also. Upon completing projects, students could hardly wait to see what unusual things their peers came up with.

By looking at a couple of individual cases, I can best explain the effect I saw Talents Unlimited having on my low academic achievers. The first one is the little girl I wrote of earlier. Even though she is one of my lowest academic students, she has come forth as one of the top in communications. In this talent, her lists are longer than the others', and when the activity is oral, her hand is still going up long after the others have run out of ideas. This being about the only time we hear from her, the positive peer reaction is great. The other students recognize her outstanding ability in this talent area.

I have a little boy who is low-average academically. He is probably our best productive thinker, and he knows it. I love the smug grin he gets on his face after doing a transformation. You can almost see the pride in his knowing that his will probably be one of the most unusual.

I have seen frustration on the part of higher academic students attempting Talent activities. I've also noted that this isn't a long term feeling. These students need some time to realize that there isn't always one right answer, and in other talent areas, they may not be the best. Feeling this frustration, and learning to deal with it may be a valuable lesson for future life experience.

Self-Concept Assessment: In the self-concept assessment there were eleven items, ten of them directly dealing with self-concept feelings. Five dealt with academic self-concept and five with social. For each positive answer, the student got one point. Nothing was given for negative answers.

In an overall view, the academic mean self-concept of the control group for the pre-test was4.24. For the post-test, it was 3.91, the difference being a -.33. The academic mean for the experimental group's pre-test was very close to that of the control group, being at 4.25. The post-test mean was 4.35, a difference of +.1, For academic self-concept, the experimental group gained, while the self-concept of the control group actually declined.

For social self-concept, the mean of the control group for the pre-test was at 3.83, and for the post-test was at 3.47, showing a decline of .36. The experimental group's pre-test mean was higher at 4.2, but it also declined. It went to 3.95, a decline of .25. This decline was not as great as that of the control group.

The use of a questionaire given to the teachers in the control group aided in breaking this data down to finer limits. Through the responses given to the questions, I could clearly see two groups form in the amount of time spent on self-concept enhancement. Even though both of the groups felt that the improvement of student self-concepts

was an important goal in education, one group definitely spent more time in pursuit of that goal. I will lable this as the high emphasis self-concept group. The other will be called the moderate emphasis self-concept group.

Some of the self-concept activities used by the teachers in the high emphasis group were dittos and discussions on each student's special qualities and uniqueness. One of the teachers spent one hour per week for the whole semester on such activities. Value clarification activities were also popular with these teachers. Another one of the teachers had daily one on one conferences with each student. Other things they did, (i.e. positive reinforcement and happy grams,) fell right in with daily activities.

The moderate emphasis teachers didn't spend much time on activities whose main objectives were the enhancement of self-concept. Their strategies dealt more with their classroom attitudes and practices. These included student rewards and praise for individual academic accomplishment, positive praise notes sent home, an attitude of acceptance, and developing relationships outside of the academic setting.

Tables A-1 and A-2 show how the experimental group compared to each of these groups in self-concept assessment.

A-1
Changes in Academic Self-Concept

	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
High Emphasis Self-Concept Group	4.32	4.13	-.19
Moderate Emphasis Self-Concept Group	4.12	3.6	-.52
Experimental Group	4.25	4.35	+.1

A-2
Changes in Social Self-Concept

	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
High Emphasis Self-Concept Group	4.02	3.78	-.24
Moderate Emphasis Self-Concept Group	3.55	3.02	-.53
Experimental Group	4.2	3.95	-.25

The last comparisons I want to make are within the experimental group. These comparisons are to find out the difference in self-concept between high and low academic students who are involved with Talents Unlimited. These comparisons are made in tables B-1 and B-2.

B-1
Changes in Academic Self-Concept for Experimental Class Subgroups

	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
High Academic Achievers	4.5	4.5	0
Low Academic Achievers	4	4.2	+.2

B-2
Changes in Social Self-Concept for Experimental Class Subgroups

	Pre-test	Post-test	Change
High Academic Achievers	4.4	3.8	-.6
Low Academic Achievers	4	4.1	+.1

Summary and Conclusions

Taking an overview of the data, I feel the evidence shows that the use of Talents Unlimited does have a positive effect on student academic and social self-concept.

The effect cannot be denied when looking at the similar classroom experiences of many educators. We have seen, through words, actions, and facial expressions, the excitement and good feelings generated by using Talent activities. Students who otherwise cower behind their academ-

ic disabilities, feel the ability to come out of their shells because they know they can volunteer something valuable in a certain talent.

The evidence brought out through the self-concept assessment also supports the hypotheses. Through my teaching emphasies and strategies, I feel I am comparable to the moderate emphasis self-concept group. While their group declined (.52) in academic self-concept, the experimental group gained .1. In social self-concept, while both groups declined, the moderate emphasis control group declined .28 more than the experimental group. Thus, I feel the better levels of academic and social self-concept in the similarly taught experimental group were due to the use of the Talents Unlimited program.

The comparison of the experimental group to the high-emphasis self-concept group was surprising to me. The academic self-concept of the high emphasis group also dropped, although only .19. But remember, the experimental group gained. In social self-concept, the high emphasis group went down .24, only .01 less than the experimental group. In those control group rooms, many, many hours of teaching time were used solely in the pursuit of enhancing self-concepts. With Talents Unlimited, the time spent soley on these types of activities was minimal as it was used most often in conjunction with the academics. Think of all the extra academic teaching hours allowed to me with similar re-

sults.

At this point I would like to make note of some social problems in my class. My girls represent four different neighborhoods. These have formed some very tight, closed cliques. This has been causing social problems in my class all year long. We've been working on these problems throughout the year, but have not yet been able to solve them. I wonder if given most other classroom groups, whether the experimental group would have declined in social self-concept as much as it did.

This study also showed that the effect of Talents Unlimited was greater on the self-concept of low academic students than the high academic students. Figure B-1 demonstrates that while there was no change in the academic self-concept of the high academic achievers, the academic self-concept of the low academic achievers went up by .2. I am convinced that this is due to the fact that in Talents Unlimited they are finally made aware that they do have something of value to contribute to the academic scene. For some of them, it's their first experiences with academic success.

The differences between the two groups in social self-concept is even greater. While the high academic achievers went down .6, the low academic achievers went up.1. Looking at the low academic achievers, this is great since all the control groups also went down. I have to attribute this to the positive peer feedback going on in the classroom during Talent activities. These activities let the low academic

achievers be seen in a different light. Now to deal with the comparatively drastic drop in the social self-concept of the high academic achievers. I think this is because of the issue brought up by so many of the educators. Starting in Talents Unlimited is a blow to some of their egos. These students are used to being the ones who stand out in the classroom. They are used to being looked up to, and looked to for help in ordinary academic situations. Now, suddenly, they must share the spotlight. It takes time for these high academic achievers to get used to that. It is my assumption that this negative effect on their self-concept will eventually decrease, as they get used to their new Talents Unlimited classroom roles. Thus, at this time it isn't of great concern. It might be wise however, to retest them at a later date to see if this assumption is in fact is true. If not, a reevaluation of the program might be called for.

In summary, I feel my evidence shows that the use of Talents Unlimited does in fact have a positive impact on student academic and social self-concept, and that impact is greater on low academic achievers than on high academic achievers. Through the results of this study, I feel I can be comfortable with what's happening to student self-concept in my classroom. And it feels good to know that these positive kinds of things are happening with minimal

time spent outside of the academics.

Note: The T-test was not done in evaluating assessment scores, because the limited number of responses on the assessment would invalidate it.

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Appendix A
Summary of Talents Unlimited Lesson Plans

A-1: Summary of objectives:

1. By doing certain lessons, the students will be motivated to learn more about a particular subject.
2. The lessons will give students a new way to look at material already presented. (Alternate learning modes.)
3. The students will demonstrate their understanding of a story or lesson by completing the Talent activity.
4. Through some Talent lessons, the students will be introduced to new topics of study.
5. The students will gain practice in using their divergent thinking skills.

Note: Before the students begin any Talent lesson, the teacher should review that particular talent's behaviors with them. (See A-2)

A-2

STUDENT TALENT BEHAVIORS

PRODUCTIVE THINKING

1. The student expresses many ideas though not all of the highest quality.
2. The student expresses a variety of kinds of responses.
3. The student expresses unusual, uncommon responses though not all of the ideas prove to be useful.
4. The student is able to build onto or embroider a basic idea by adding details to make it more interesting and complete.

FORECASTING

1. The student predicts many different causes/effects of given situations.

COMMUNICATION

1. The student produces many words that fit different categories.
2. The student uses a variety of words to describe his feelings and his values.
3. The student expresses words and ideas to make comparisons among things, to show relationships or associations.
4. The student demonstrates the capacity for participating in another's feelings or ideas by sharing similar experiences or thoughts of his own.
5. The student can organize words into meaningful networks of ideas yielding a single product or multiple responses.
6. The student can effectively interpret and use non-verbal forms of communication to express his ideas, feelings and needs to others.

DECISION MAKING

1. The student is able to outline many alternatives to the problem he wishes to solve in terms of limitations, relevancy, and people affected.
2. The student is able to weigh each alternative to the problem he wishes to solve in terms of his needs and/or goals.
3. The student is able to make a final judgment between/among the alternatives.
4. The student is able to defend his decision, giving as many different reasons as he can for his choice.

PLANNING

1. The student identifies his project with enough details about his basic idea to explain what he wants to do.
2. The student is sensitive to problems that could arise as he works on the project.
3. The student is able to organize the materials, time and resources necessary to carry out his project.

A-3
Talent Lessons

Lesson 1

Talent: An introduction to all talents

Materials: Visual aids associated with a baker and his product, and posters for each talent with their behaviors listed.

Activity: Give an introduction to the total Talents Unlimited program, its purpose and what's involved. Explain the behaviors of each talent by relating them to the baking industry.

Lesson 2

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: One ditto of the line to be transformed per student, pencils and crayons

Activity: The students will individually transform the line. Their creations will then be shared and classified.

Lesson 3

Talent: Productive Thinking - Imaginary

Materials: One copy of a "Have you ever seen..." ditto per child, drawing paper, pencils and crayons.

Activity: The students will finish the sentences by having a variety of animals doing things they'd never really do. Then each student will pick the one he feels is his most unusual one and illustrate it.

Lesson 4

Talent: Communications #2

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers

Activity: This activity is to be done with the reading book, A Place for Me. After reading part one of "A Place for Fred", the students will brainstorm a list of words to describe how Fred is feeling in the picture on page 68.

Lesson 5

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Cut out lily pads, drawing paper, crayons, pencils and glue for each student

Activity: After reading the story, "Freddy Finds a Frog" in the People Need People reading book, the students will do individual transformations of a lily pad.

Lesson 6

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Drawing paper with "17" written on it, crayons and pencils for each student

Activity: After reading "Kim and Rosa" in A Time for Friends, each student will do a transformation of the number 17.

Lesson 7

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers

Activity: The students will make a composite list of the many, varied, unusual plants they are familiar with.

Lesson 8

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers

Activity: After a discussion on the period and its uses, the students will brainstorm a list of the many, varied, unusual other places dots are used outside of academics.

Lesson 9

Talent: Productive Thinking - Imaginary

Materials: Writing paper and pencils

Activity: The reading group in People Need People will do this activity after reading the story, "The Giant Who Didn't Win". They will compile individual lists of contests you could have that a giant would be sure to win.

Lesson 10

Talent: Communications #3

Materials: Writing paper and pencils

Activity: After reading part one of "Maggie in the Middle" in A Time for Friends, each student in the reading group will make a list of, "Maggie's kangaroo is as green as...".

Lesson 11

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Whatever is needed to follow through on some of

the ideas

Activity: The reading group in A Time for Friends will read the poem, "At Mrs. Appleby's". Then they will orally list the many, varied, unusual things we could do to our room to make it feel like spring in our classroom all winter long. Then we'll act on a few of the ideas.

Lessons 12 & 13

Talent: Communication #1

Materials: Watermelon, carrots and paper towels for each child, chart paper and markers.

Activities: After looking at, feeling, smelling, and tasting a carrot, the students will list many, varied, single words to describe a carrot. They will then do the same for watermelon.

When the lists are complete, we will discuss the differences and similarities of carrots and watermelons. The students will take these descriptions home in the Friday newsletter in the form of riddles to see if their families can guess what we described.

Lesson 14

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: At least two pieces of drawing paper divided into eight sections, pencils and crayons for each student

Activity: The students in A Place for Me will read part 1

of "The Small Lot". They will then draw pictures of the many, varied, unusual things you could turn the small lot into.

Lesson 15

Talent: Productive Thinking - Imaginary

Materials: Pencils, scissors and paper in the shape of a caldron for each child

Activity: After listening to and copying "Witch's Brew", the students will list many, varied, unusual ingredients that would go into a witch's brew.

Lesson 16

Talent: Planning

Materials: Crackers, peanut butter, paper and pencils for all of the students, and a knife

Activity: Each student will write a plan for making a peanut butter sandwich, so that someone who never made one before could make one. We will then act out the plans, one at a time, each eating his own sandwich.

Lessons 17 & 18

Talent: Communications #2

Materials: None

Activities: After seeing the filmstrip, "The Hare and the Tortoise", the students will orally brainstorm many, varied words describing how the tortoise felt when he won the race. They will then do the same for the hare.

Lesson 19

Talent: Planning

Materials: Paper and pencils

Activity: The students in A Time for Friends will read the story, "Bert's Berries". Teacher Talk: Bert is in the tree watching over his berries. You want some very badly. Write a plan to show how you would get past Bert and into the berries.

Lesson 20

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Paper and pencils

Activity: After reading "Tammy Camps in the Rocky Mountains", the students in People Need People will make a list of the many, varied, unusual things they would need to take if they were going on a camping trip. The list can be written or in the form of small pictures.

Lesson 21

Talent: Planning

Materials: Paper, pencils, and crayons

Activity: The reading group in A Place for Me will read the story, "Amy". They will then make a plan for a corner for their new pet.

Lessons 22 & 23

Talent: Communications #3

Materials: Paper, cotten balls with small paper strips

glued on them, crayons, gold colored paper cubes and pencils for each student.

Activities: The students, in conjunction with a unit on weather will compile two lists. The first on will be, "Cumulus clouds are as fluffy as...". The other one will be, "Rainbows are as colorful as...". Each student will pick his best one off of each list and write the "cloud" word on the cotton ball and the other on the cube. These will then go on a weather bulletin board as part of a cloud and a pot of gold.

Lesson 24

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Paper and pencils

Activity: This activity will be done by the students in A Time for Friends after reading, "Two Friends". The students will compile a list of things they could do to or for a friend who's having a bad day to cheer him up. The students should then be encouraged to try one or more of their ideas.

Lesson 25

Talent: Productive Thinking - Problem Solving

Materials: Paper and pencils

Activities: After reading part one of "The Grumpiest Man" in A Place for Me, this reading group will make individual lists of the many, varied, unusual ways the grumpiest man could get some peace and quiet.

Lesson 26

Talent: Productive Thinking - Problem Solving

Materials: None

Activity: The students in People Need People will read part one of "Wet Albert". They will then orally brainstorm many, varied, unusual ways to keep Albert dry.

Lesson 27

Talent: Planning

Materials: Paper and pencils, popcorn popper, popcorn, oil, salt and anything else necessary to make popcorn

Activity: The students will write individual plans to make popcorn. We will then act out the plans and eat the results.

Lesson 28

Talent: Forecasting

Materials: None

Activity: After reading "Quiet on Account of Dinosaus" in People Need People, the students will orally brainstorm many, varied predictions about what changes would be necessary in our world if dinosaurs came back.

Lesson 29

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Drawing paper with Belinda's hat drawn on it, pencils and crayons for each student.

Activity: The students in A Time for Friends will read the story, "The New Spring Hat". Teacher Talk: In trying to find a hat, Belinda did some productive thinking. I want you to reverse what she did and come up with many, varied, unusual things you could turn her hat into. Then pick the one you think no one else will think of and draw your transformation.

Lesson 30

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Paper and pencils

Activity: After reading the poem, "Sing a Song of People" in A Place For Me, the students in this group will make individual written or picture lists of other many, varied, unusual things that go up and down.

Lessons 31, 32, & 33

Talents: Communications#1,2, and 5

Materials: Two sheets of chart paper and markers, pencils and writing paper for each student

Activities: The class will first come up with a composite list of many, varied, single words to describe a dinosaur. Then they will come up with another list of many, varied, single words to describe how they would feel if they were walking along and suddenly met up with a dinosaur. The students will then write individual dinosaur stories, using at least three words from each list.

Lesson 34

Talent: Productive Thinking

Materials: Pencils and drawing paper, and a picture of wrapped Christmas gifts

Activity: The students will make individual picture lists of the many, varied, unusual things that could fit in the long striped package.

Lessons 35, 36, 37, & 38

Talents: Communications #1 and 5

Materials: Chart paper and markers, writing paper and pencils

Activities: As a class we will compile three lists. We will give many, varied, single words to describe a princess, a prince or hero, and a villian. The students will then use communications 5 to write a fairy tale, using at least two words from each list.

Lessons 39 & 40

Talents: Productive Thinking and Communications #6

Materials: Paper and pencils, blank paper strips, markers and masking tape

Activities: The students will make individual lists of action words describing the many, varied, unusual things they do in their free time. The teacher will select many of the responses and write them on the strips. The children then take turns acting them out and guessing what the others are doing, without any speaking.

Lessons 41 & 42

Talent: Communications #1 and 5

Materials: Chalk board and chalk, pencils, crayons and drawing paper

Activities: As a class, we will compile a list of many, varied, single words that a baker could use to describe his baked goods. The students will then use these words in constructing poster-sized bakery advertisements.

Appendix B

B-1
Student Self-Concept Assessment

Teacher Read Instructions:

At the top of this paper I've given to you are two words, boy and girl. If you're a boy, please circle the word "boy", and girls circle "girl". Also, behind the word age, write in your age.

Just below that are some sentences. I will read them to you. If you agree with them, circle the smiley face behind the sentence. If you disagree, circle the face with the frown on it.

Please answer honestly. This is not a test, so the only right answers are the ones that tell the truth about you. Your name isn't on this paper, so once you hand it in, what you say will stay private.

Let's get started. Remember to answer what is right for you!

B-2
Student Sheet

Boy Girl Age____

1. I am in the second grade. ----------
2. Most of the kids in my class like me. -------
3. I usually do well on my schoolwork. ---------
4. I have lots of friends. ----------
5. I am smart. ----------
6. I like to get my report card. ----------
7. I always have lots of kids to play with on the playground. ----------
8. I'm popular. ----------
9. I can often help others with their schoolwork. ----------
10. It's easy for me to learn new things in school. ----------
11. Other people like being around me. ---------

B-3
Teacher Questionaire

1. Would you say that student self-concept has a definate relationship to academic achievement?

Yes____ No____

2. Rate yourself as to the level of importance you place on enhancing self-concept in your classroom.
(1=Primary Goal, 5=Not A Goal)

1 2 3 4 5

3. Do you use any units or lessons whose primary concern is the improvement of self-concept?

Yes____ No____

If yes, describe briefly including approximately how many instructional hours are spent.

4. Briefly describe any daily teaching strategies you use toward the enhancement of a positive self-concept (ie. frequent positive reinforcement).

B-4

Sept. 30, 1983

Dear Talent Teacher,

I need your help. I am working on my Educational Research project. The subject I'm studying is the effect of Talents Unlimited on student academic and social self-concept. Since you see and deal with the true-to-life effects of Talents Unlimited on students, I regard you as a valuable resource. Would you please give me some feedback on this by filling out the attached questionaire? You can return it to me in the enclosed envelope through REMC.

Your responses will remain anonomous. The number on the envelope is only there to help me keep track of the responses received.

Thanks so much. I really appreciate your help as I know how busy you are.

Sincerely,

Deb Pyle

Deb Pyle
Second Grade Teacher
Lincoln Elementary, Zeeland

B-5
Teacher Questionaire

What grade do you teach? _____

What subject(s) do you teach? _____
_____

Do you use Talents Unlimited in your classroom? _____

Approximately how often? _____

Which of the talents do you use? (Check as many as applicable.)

Productive Thinking ____ Planning ____
Communications ____ Forecasting ____
Decision Making ____

Briefly discuss why you feel that T.U. is a program worthy or not of using classroom time for. (Use the back if necessary.)

What kinds of effects do you see the use of T.U. having on the self-concept of your students. (Use the back if necessary.)

(Please return by Oct. 16)

B-6

Sample Questions for Teacher Interwiew

1. With the "back to basics" push, how do you justify the time you spend using Talents Unlimited?
2. How do you feel when using a Talent lesson?
3. How do your students react when you present a Talent lesson?
4. What positive and negative effects do you see the use of Talents Unlimited as having on your students?
5. Does the use of Talents Unlimited affect student self-concept? How?
6. Do you see any difference in the effect on low vs. high academic students?

B-7

Sample Questions for Trainer Interviews

1. What attracted you to the Talents Unlimited program?
2. With the "back to basics" push and so much to get through to your education students, why do you feel you can use your valuable time to train your students in Talents Unlimited?
3. How do your students react to Talents Unlimited?
4. After they use it on their students, what kind of feedback do you get from them?
5. Do you feel that the use of Talents Unlimited has any effect on student self-concept? What effect?
6. Do you see any difference in the effect on low vs. high academic achievers?

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